

This is the letter I have been sending to our representatives. Most of them already want change, but as they said at the Feb March for change, they need to hear from us. They say the letters not wanting change outnumber ours 100:1. It is for this reason that I put myself out there and hope, that if you haven't decided to already, that this will help you decide to help change the laws. We owe it to ourselves and those children to try.

I am the mom of Sandy Hook School 1st and 2nd graders. I truly believe that if Adam Lanza had not had access to assault rifles that day we would have seen a different story. Some of the children might have died, but not 20. My 6 yr old daughter might not have lost her best friend Gracie. She still sits alone on the bus to school missing her friend. She might not have lost half of her daisy troop. My 7 yr old might not have lost his swim buddy Daniel or his daycare friend Noah. I would not be worrying about my children's mental health for the rest of their lives. I am sure that this event will be a part of me for the rest of my life and I worry how it will affect my children's lives. If a change in the law had saved just one life, wouldn't it have been worth it?

I was there on Dec 14th in the parking lot. I was supposed to be making gingerbread houses in my daughter's class. From the parking lot, I helplessly watched, as they brought out my daughter's daisy friend, Jessica. I watched as the police officer held her lifeless little body in his arms. She looked so much like my daughter that I had to look hard to see that it wasn't. Her long brown hair was flowing down and she had a gunshot wound to her head and blood all over her midriff. I watched as the sole survivor from one class came out covered head to toe in blood and flesh. I watched and waited and waited in that parking lot, begging God that my kids be safe, until they finally came out.

We need to change the laws. We have to try and make sure that no one else has to live that day and the days forward that we in Sandy Hook have to live. Complacency with the status quo is not good enough. We need to ban assault rifles and I don't care about the cosmetic differences – all of them! Ban high capacity clips. Enact background checks everywhere – no more loopholes and Address mental health. All this gun death is a uniquely United States phenomenon. Australia banned assault rifles in 1996. Before then they had 18 mass murders, after -0. Same with the UK, who had one more mass shooting after the ban. There are only about 200 legally justified self-defense homicides by private citizens compared with 30,000 deaths. The NRA is blocking people from finding out the gun statistics because they know the outcome and this needs to stop too. The gun companies have even gotten congress to put laws stating they can't be sued. I don't think they should be above the law. Cigarette companies weren't. I know there are responsible hunters and hand gun owners out there and no one has any interest in taking their guns away. The absurd laws have to go though.

At the March for Change, in February, Vicky Soto's sister spoke. During her heart wrenching speech she said "imagine the 5 most important people in your life and write them on a piece of paper. Now hand me the paper and let me cross one out." She said they found her sister, riddled with bullets, cradling a child in her arms. You wouldn't want your friends or family to be next and I don't want it to be mine or anyone else's for that matter. I know that changing all the laws will not bring back my children's friends (and that breaks my heart), but who knows, maybe it will be your child that the changes save. Change the laws now. Your job depends on it.

Susan Ludwig/Harrell (mother of 4 future voters)